

### **Oversight Hearing:**

**“To examine the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget for the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service and ongoing efforts to reduce their respective maintenance backlogs.”**

### **Bureau of Land Management**

As the Nation’s largest land manager, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is charged with the multiple use management of natural resources on 261 million acres of surface estate of public land – nearly one-eighth of all land in the United States. Most of the country’s BLM-managed public land is located in 12 western States, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of onshore Federal mineral estate. In addition, the BLM has trust responsibilities on 56 million acres of Indian trust lands for mineral operations. As directed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the BLM, with a workforce of over 11,000 employees, provides the general public a variety of uses so as to benefit present and future generations, such as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing and energy and mineral development, while conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

For FY’05, the Bush Administration has requested \$1.8 billion be allocated for BLM programs, subject to annual appropriations. This is a \$33.9 million increase over the FY’04 enacted level, which was \$1.79 billion. Among the highlights of this year’s budget request for the BLM are as follows:

Appropriation	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Request	Difference 2005-2004
Management of Lands and Resource	\$839 M	\$837 M	- 2.3 M
Wildland Fire Management	\$685 M	\$743 M	+ 57 M
Construction	\$13.8M	\$6.4 M	- 7.3 M
Central Hazardous Materials	\$9.8 M	\$9.8 M	0
Land Acquisition	\$18.3 M	\$24 M	+ 5.6 M
Oregon and California Grant Lands	\$105 M	\$116 M	- 10 M
Range Improvements	\$10 M	\$10 M	0
Trust Funds	\$12.4 M	\$12.4 M	0
Total	\$1.694 B	\$1.759 B	+ 64.5 M

In addition to the appropriated request above, the BLM has requested \$1.2 billion be allocated from its permanently appropriated accounts, such as Southern Nevada Land Sales, Naval Oil Shale, and Forest Ecosystems Health and Recovery programs. This represents a \$638 million increase from what will be collected from FY’04. The total budget request for the BLM for FY’05 is 2.9 billion.

Wildland Fire Management: The budget request proposes to maintain the Administration's continued commitment to implementing the National Fire Plan and reducing the loss of life and property and environmental damage caused by unwanted wildland fires. The budget also proposes to meet the Administration's commitment to implementing the Healthy Forest Initiative to address one of the a primary cause of catastrophic wildfires, the excessive buildup of hazardous fuel loads in the forest and rangelands. The budget includes \$25 million increase for the hazardous fuels reduction projects in the wildland-urban interface. The FY'05 fire budget request includes \$28 million increase to fully fund suppression operations at the 10-year average, providing increased assurance that Interior has readily available the necessary resources to effectively respond to an average fire season. Finally, the budget proposes to reduce the rural fire assistance program by \$4.9 million in recognition of the significant expansion of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's local fire assistance program.

Construction and Maintenance: The budget request proposes to increase the construction program by \$6.5 million, a decrease of \$7.3 million from the FY'04 enacted level. This request will support 16 construction projects in nine states, covering improvements to such facilities as campgrounds, sanitation systems and administration buildings. Site and facility priorities are determined through an evaluation of applicable health and safety issues, resource protection needs, mission support objectives, and public service goals. In terms of maintenance, the budget request provides for \$76.5 million in BLM's Management of Lands and resource Account for critical maintenance needs, including \$11 million for deferred maintenance and \$28 million for infrastructure improvement. Funding for these projects is prioritized based on critical health and safety in accordance with the Department's five-year deferred maintenance and capital improvement plan. A total of \$37 million is requested for annual maintenance and operations.

Land Acquisition: The budget proposes \$24 million, an increase of \$5.6 million over FY'04 enacted level. The request includes \$19 million for line-item projects to support 14 projects in nine states.

Wild Horse and Burro Program: Currently, 39,000 wild horses and burros live on the open range, 14,000 more than the appropriate management levels (AML). An additional 21,000 live in short and long-term holding facilities. According to the BLM, continuing the program at these high levels is neither ecologically nor financially sustainable over the long haul. Thus, the FY'05 budget request includes an increase of \$10.5 million to reach the appropriate AML in the next two to three years and maintain that level thereafter.

Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) - Challenge Cost Share: The challenge cost share program allows BLM to initiate and complete many on-the-ground resource protection and restoration projects, and recreation enhancement projects, that according to the BLM would not be possible. Approximately 900 projects totaling over \$30 million were submitted to BLM offices for 2004 funding. For FY'05, BLM is requesting \$10 million for the CCI , a \$2.6 million increase over the FY'04 enacted levels.

National Energy Plan: In FY'05, the BLM expects to continue to implement the President's National Energy Policy, especially its goal of improving access to abundant energy resources

located on public lands. The FY'05 Budget maintains total budgetary resources for the energy and minerals program at the FY'04 enacted level through a combination of appropriated funds and cost recovery. The agency proposes to implement regulations to increase current user fees, primarily for leasing-related actions, to reflect the total cost of the service provided, which is estimated to raise an additional \$4 million in revenues.

### **National Park Service**

In 1872, Congress designated Yellowstone National Park as the Nation's first "...public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Then, on August 25, 1916, Congress established the National Park Service to manage the resources of the park system for the enjoyment of this and future generations." Today, the National Park Service and its 20,000 employees manage a Park System that includes 388 units ranging from premier national parks, historic sites and national recreation areas to national battlefields, memorials, lakeshores, and national and scenic trails as well as wild and scenic rivers. These units cover over 84 million acres of land in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam Samoa, and the Northern Marianas. In 2005, it is anticipated that nearly 260 million people will visit the Nation's national parks.

For FY'05, the Bush Administration has requested \$2.3 billion be allocated for NPS programs, subject to annual appropriations. This is a \$102 million increase over the FY'04 enacted level, which was \$2.2 billion. Among the highlights of this year's budget request for the NPS are as follows:

Appropriation	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Request	Difference 2005-2004
Operation of NPS	\$1.6 B	\$1.68 B	+ 76 M
U.S. Park Police	\$77.8 M	\$81.2 M	+ 3.3 M
Natl. Recreation/Preservation	\$61.7 M	\$37.7 M	- 24 M
Urban Park & Recreation Fund	\$301 K	\$ 0	- 301 K
Historic Preservation Fund	\$73.5 M	\$77.5 M	+ 3.9 M
Construction & Major Maintenance	\$329.8 M	\$329.8 M	0
Land Acquisition/State Assistance	\$139.5 M	\$178 M	+ 42.5 M
Trust Funds	\$12.4 M	\$12.4 M	0
Total	\$2.258 B	\$2.360 B	+ 101.9 M

In addition to the appropriated request above, the NPS has requested \$311 million be allocated from its permanently appropriated accounts, such as Recreation Fee Program, Construction Trust Fund and other permanent appropriations. This represents a \$14.9 million increase from what will be collected from FY'04. The total budget request for the NPS for FY'05 is 2.67 billion.

Park Operations: The request for the Operation of the National Park System appropriation that funds visitor services, resource preservation and protection and other park programs is \$1.7 billion, a net increase of \$76.5 million over FY'04. An increase of \$22 million is requested for park base operations focusing on maintenance and security. Funding of \$8.3 million is requested for new park responsibilities, including \$365,000 to establish operations at the newly created Flight 93 National Memorial, Pennsylvania.

Deferred Maintenance Backlog: The NPS preserves and maintains nearly 16,000 administrative and public use buildings, which includes an estimated 5,700 historic structures, 1,200 water systems, 1,400 wastewater systems, about 1,100 campgrounds, and 11,900 miles of paved and unpaved roads. The centerpiece of the President's approach to addressing the backlog—focusing on priorities and performance accomplishments through a comprehensive asset management strategy--has enabled the NPS, for the first time in its history, to inventory its assets and measure the condition of its facilities. This information will be used to monitor and prioritize ongoing maintenance needs, thus ensuring the best use of taxpayer dollars. During the past three years, the NPS has implemented this management reform process to provide a comprehensive asset inventory and establish a service-wide baseline for facility conditions. An increase of more than \$8 million is proposed in the FY'05 budget for repair and rehabilitation. The NPS will use these additional funds to improve a defined set of priority buildings to good condition, thus applying the facility condition information gathered during the initial condition assessment phase. The proposed repair and rehabilitation program now totals more than \$107 million. The NPS completed approximately 860 repair and rehabilitation projects in just two years. These projects have enhanced the experience of park visitors and improved employee safety. The NPS has also improved health and safety in parks by upgrading and repairing 180 water, wastewater, and sewer facilities. The proposed FY'05 budget provides \$10 million in park-specific operating increases for repair and maintenance of buildings and roads, and an additional \$3 million to remove deteriorating hazardous structures, which will be of great significance to managing the maintenance backlog for years to come.

Between FY'02 and FY'04, a total of \$2.8 billion has been appropriated to specifically address the deferred maintenance issue. The FY'05 budget proposes \$1.1 billion, including \$310 million as part of the President's Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century reauthorization proposal. This request reflects an increase of \$77 million over the FY 2004 level for reducing the maintenance backlog.

Law Enforcement: The FY'05 budget request includes a \$12.4 million increase for law enforcement and related protection needs, including \$4.7 million for the protection of border and icon parks. The non-park portions of this increase include \$1.2 million for regional special agents, \$2.2 million for the incident management analysis and reporting system (IMARS), and \$300,000 for establishing central management of the law enforcement function. Also included in the request is \$2 million to increase United States Park Police site security of monuments and icons, and \$2 million for security needs associated with the 2005 Presidential Inaugural ceremonies. However, it appears that funds were not budgeted for costs associated with the increase in the National Threat Level from Yellow to Orange.

Land Acquisition: The land acquisition funding request for the NPS is \$84 million, a net increase of \$42.5 million. The FY'0505 request includes \$40 million for Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida. The NPS would use the funds to acquire a portion of the oil and gas holdings underlying the Preserve from the Collier Resources Company. Other proposed land acquisitions in the FY'05 request, totaling \$21 million, include \$2.2 million for the Flight 93 National Memorial, Pennsylvania, and \$5 million for Civil War battlefield grants

Cooperative Conservation Initiative: The proposed budget requests \$21 million, most of which will provide new and expanded opportunities for partner participation through the NPS Challenge Cost Share Program. In the FY'05 request, \$12 million will be funded in the Challenge Cost Share Program for natural resource restoration. The CCI funds projects based on a one-to-one or better match in funds. This funding request will expand opportunities for cooperative conservation partnerships and citizen-steward initiatives to promote the President's vision of a new environmentalism. This vision is built on the principles of local input, community action, and respect for private property. It also encompasses working with States, Tribes, local communities, and citizens to sustain healthy lands, promote thriving communities, and productive economies, while empowering citizens to do what the government cannot do alone.